

Happy New Year.

Though 'tis not the time of roses, and the weary land reposes
Underneath no golden glory and no shade of froned palm;
Tho' the earth has lost her brightness, save for robes of snowy whiteness,
And the wild winds whistle coldly in the place of summer calm;
Yet a power divine attending, and a love supreme befriending,
Fill the heart with sunlit gladness and with summer all the time;
There's no lack of light and beauty on the path of faith and duty,
For a life to God devoted is forever in its prime.
So we cross the mystic portal, for a hand benign, immortal,
Takes our own and leads us onward to the unknown nights and days;
And an eye that never sleepeth loving vigil o'er us keepeth,
As we tread the New Year's pathway with the song of trust and praise.

As Others See Us.

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In a recent number of our able contemporary, the Westminster, we notice a review of the new Methodist Catechism, by the Rev. John Laing, D.D. As might be expected, Dr. Laing's doctrinal standpoint differs in many essential points from ours. Of this we have no reason to complain, nor is it worth while now to revive the controversy as to whether our more emphatic presentation of human duty, or the Westminster emphatic presentation of Divine sovereignty and the work of the Spirit, is more perfectly scriptural.

We are also most happy to acknowledge our indebtedness to the grand old Westminster symbol. It is indeed not the first time that we have incurred this debt. More than half a century ago, the eminent Methodist theologian, Richard Watson, in preparing a catechism for English Methodism, drew largely on the same source, so that many of these definitions are as familiar to us as they are to our Presbyterian brethren.

But on one or two points we think our Calvinistic, or, if he prefers it, Augustinian brother, has done us scant justice, and has, we think, unduly magnified the divergence of the two churches. Of

course our brother must permit us not to accept the Westminster definition, or doctrine of Divine sovereignty, foreordination and election, inasmuch as we do not believe these to be the true expression or sense of Scripture. But it does not follow that we ignore a true doctrine of Divine sovereignty as presented in Scripture, nor even a true doctrine of foreordination and election; though we do not regard these as first principles to be taught to children.

Again, in the Westminster enumeration of the Divine attributes, why are his mercy which "endureth forever," and his love of which it is said "God is love," omitted? The answer will, of course, be that they are included in his goodness. So we have included justice as one of the most essential elements of the Divine holiness, in this following many of the ablest theologians.

We make no objection to several other notes in which our standpoint certainly differs from that of the Westminster Catechism. But on two points we may venture to suggest that our critic may not have read more than sectional headings, when he says that "from the sixth section on, much is taught in detail that is regarded by the church as duty and only deduced from Scripture." In re-examination of these sections we fail to find a single element of Christian duty which can be regarded as resting on the authority of ordinances of the church, or which is not directly taught as a duty in the New Testament. We have simply attempted to apply the Christian ethics of the New Testament to our modern everyday life.

The other point relates to the office and work of the Spirit. The criticism leaves the impression that "the work of the Spirit is ignored," because it does not appear in one particular question—forgetting that in 29, repentance is a grace of the Holy Spirit, in 33, regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit, in 37, sanctification wrought by the Holy Spirit, and that in 72, 73, 74, the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and in the individual believer is fully defined. Of course it is not so defined as to include an irresistible operation of the Spirit by which one class of men are separated from another. In a section dealing with the practical use of the means of grace, we have thought it sufficient to teach our children to "attend thereto with diligence, preparation and prayer." Surely those who obey this teaching cannot and do not ignore the work of the Spirit.